

The Plant Lady

speaks

By Teresa Kluwer, Park Operations Supervisor

Large trees are admired by all. The large spreading branches of a beech, the height of a giant sequoia, or the tree-formed room under a weeping willow all impress us. Dependent on the tree species, becoming a BIG tree may take 50 years or it may encompass 300 years. And, what exactly does BIG mean?

A National Register of Big Trees is maintained by American Forests. Measuring guidelines are standardized for comparing trees and include trunk circumference, vertical tree height and average crown spread. Points are assigned for each element, added together, and the most points for each tree species designate the champion. If two trees score within 5 points of each other, they are listed as co-champions. Two Sitka spruces, one in Oregon and one in Washington, share co-champion status. Washington's tree located in Olympic National Park near Quinault Lake measures 63.5 inches in circumference and is 191 feet tall. This tree is estimated to be 700



Erica and Ethan lean against the state champion *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glaucua' at Idylwood Park.

to 800 years old. Compare that to the largest tree on record, a giant sequoia located in Sequoia National Park in California which has a circumference of 1020 inches and a height of 274 feet. Now, that is BIG!

Many states, including Washington, also maintain their own registry of State Champion Trees. Several of these state champions are located in and around Redmond. Here is a list of the Champion Trees located in public places in Redmond. Visit them with the realization these trees are special not only

among their species, but by the care and respect they have been given over their lifetime. Let's hope we continue to protect and regard these Champions while we foster new Champions for the future.

- Columnar Birch (*Betula pendula* 'Fastigiata') – 89' tall in Marymoor Park
- River Birch (*Betula nigra*) – 86' tall in Marymoor Park
- Blue Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glaucua') – 88' tall in Idylwood Park
- Chinese Elm (*Ulmus*

- parvifolia*) – 68' tall in Idylwood Park
- Thornless Honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* f. *inermis*) – 90' tall in Marymoor Park
- Bamboo Leaf Oak (*Quercus myrsinifolia*) – 44' tall in Marymoor Park

BIG trees are located throughout Washington.

Introduced tree species of great size are often located in cities and concentrated in parks. Washington Park Arboretum is home to 208 BIG trees. Our native BIG tree champions are

best represented in Olympic National Park.

To nominate a BIG tree or learn more about the BIG trees in Washington or nationwide, check out the following resources:

Champion Trees of Washington State
by Robert Van Pelt

American Forests
www.americanforests.org

